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WH29838 SENTION ONE OF TWO

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FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM

TO : GENERAL HAIG

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

SUBJ: CHINH LUAN FEATURE ARTICLE ON NVA WITHDRAWAL

REF: SAIGON 17129

1. CHINH LUAN, SOUTH VIET-NAM'S LARGEST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS DAILY, PUBLISHED AN ANALYSIS DECEMBER 7 OF THE QUESTION OF A WRITTEN AGREEMENT ON AN NVA WITHDRAWAL. THE FEATURE ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY TRAN TRIEU VIET, THE AUTHOR OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE NINEPOINT DRAFT AGREEMENT REPORTED IN THE REFERENCED CABLE. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY TRANSLATION.
2. ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES, UP TO NOW AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED AT THE PRIVATE TALKS ON EVERY ISSUE AND NORTH VIET-NAM HAS YIELDED ON EVERY POINT EXCEPT ONE WHICH THEY CANNOT ACCEPT FOR INTERNAL REASONS: THAT IS, PUTTING IN WRITING THE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-AM. THEY WILL WITHDRAW, BUT IT WILL NOT BE PUT IN WRITING. THE U.S. APPEARS TO HAVE ASSENTED TO THIS. THE RVN HAS NOT....
3. THE CLAUSE DEALING WITH WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LAOS AND CAMBODIA CAN BE SEEN AS THE ONLY ONE INDIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM, SINCE ONE CAN HARDLY SEE WHY THEY WOULD STAY IN THE SOUTH AFTER THEY LEFT THOSE TWO COUNTRIES, OR HOW THEY

4. BOTH VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN AUTHORITIES BELIEVED THAT EVEN IF THE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WERE PUT IN WRITING, THESE TROOPS COULD STILL STAY IN THE JUNGLES AND BY VARIOUS MEANS VIOLATE THE AGREEMENT.... BUT THE PROBLEM CHANGED WHEN THE NORTH REFUSED TO HAVE THE WITHDRAWAL RECORDED. IT IS THE SINGLE POINT THAT THEY HAVE INSISTED ON IN ORDER TO AVOID THE WORLD BELIEVING THEY HAD FAILED COMPLETELY.

5. THE AMERICANS APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT A SITUATION EXISTS (DEFEAT SUFFERED BY NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS, LOSS OF THOUSANDS OF TANKS AND BIG GUNS, NORTH VIET-NAM UNDER HEAVY AIR ATTACK, INABILITY OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES TO LAUNCH ANOTHER BIG OFFENSIVE...) THAT HAS COMPELLED NORTH VIET-NAM TO CONCEDE AND TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT AFTER AN AGREEMENT IS CONCLUDED, EVEN IF WITHDRAWAL IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WILL BE FORCED TO WITHDRAW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SUPPLY THE TROOPS LEFT BEHIND IN THE SOUTH.

2. THE MORALE AND FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE TROOPS LEFT BEHIND WILL CRUMBLE ONCE PEACE IS RESTORED.

3. THE FAMILIES OF NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WILL RISE IN PROTEST IF PEACE IS RESTORED AND THEIR SONS AND HUSBANDS ARE NOT RETURNED....

6. THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE TO OBLIGE NORTH VIET-NAM TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AND THE AMERICANS HAVE THE MEANS TO OBLIGE THEM TO DO SO. ACCORDING TO A NUMBER OF SOURCES, THE ESSENTIAL MEANS ARE:

1. IF NORTH VIETNAM DOES NOT WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AS TACITLY AGREED, THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT CARRY OUT SOME OF THE PROVISIONS SET FORTH IN THE AGREEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HALT AID TO THE NORTH.

2. IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS HAD TOP-LEVEL STRATEGIC DISCUSSION WITH MOSCOW AND PEKING ON THE VIET-NAM PROBLEM. THIS IS QUITE EVIDENT, BECAUSE IF THOSE DISCUSSIONS HAD NOT BEEN HELD, NORTH VIET-NAM WOULD BE WELL SUPPLIED BY MOSCOW AND PEKING, AND WE WOULD BE FACING THE SAME DIFFICULTIES THAT WE FACED IN THE BEGINNING. THE UNITED STATES AND THE TWO COMMUNIST POWERS HAVE AGREED TO KEEP A BALANCE OF FORCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA; THE AMERICANS, WITH THEIR PREDOMINANT INFLUENCE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, HAVE TO GUARANTEE THAT NORTH VIET-NAM WILL NOT BE ATTACKED BY SOUTH VIET-NAM, AND THE TWO COMMUNIST POWERS HAVE TO GUARANTEE THAT THE SOUTH WILL NOT BE ATTACKED BY THE NORTH.

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3. THE PROBLEM OF LAOS AND CANBODIA WILL HAVE TO BE SETTLED ON THE "WITHDRAWAL OF INFILTRATED TROOPS" BASIS, AND BOTH COUNTRIES MUST BE ALLOWED TO CONTROL THEIR TERRITORIES. IF THEY CAN DO SO, THEN EVEN IF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS REMAIN IN SOUTH VIET-NAM THEY WILL BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR SUPPLY ROUTES.

7. AS EXPLAINED ABOVE, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY OPTIMISTIC TO BELIEVE IN THINGS WHICH, HOWEVER REALISTIC, ARE STILL IN THE FUTURE, I.E. STILL IN THE REALM OF SPECULATION, WE SHOULD PUT THE QUESTION AS FOLLOWS: IN LEAVING THEIR TROOPS HERE, WHAT CAN THE COMMUNISTS DO, WHAT ADVANTAGES CAN THEY REAP? THEY MIGHT AIM AT THE FOLLOWING ENDS;

1. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT, THE TROOPS (DISGUISED AS THE VIET CONG) WILL SEIZE LAND AND RAISE THEIR FLAG.

2. FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS, THEY WILL RESUME LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS AND THE WAR WILL BREAK OUT ANEW.

3. IF NEITHER OF THESE PLANS CAN BE REALIZED, THE NVA TROOPS WILL BE INTEGRATED INTO THE VIET CONG ARMY TO INCREASE ITS STRENGTH WITH A VIEW TOWARD THE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPORTIONAL REDUCTIONS OF TROOPS OF BOTH SIDESX -- LEAVING THE COMMUNISTS WITH A

LARGE FORCE

8. THE AMERICANS HAVE REASSURED SOUTH VIET-NAM ON THE FIRST TWO POINTS BY STRENGTHENING THE RVNAF AND BY SETTING UP A POWERFUL ICC, BUT THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE THIRD POINT. FOR EVEN ASSUMING THAT THERE IS A WRITTEN WITHDRAWAL PROVISION, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD LEAVE A MAJOR PART OF THEIR TROOPS HERE TO BE MADE INTO CADRES AT A LATER TIME.....

9. LET US ASSUME THAT THE TWO PARTIES DO NOT REACH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE COMMUNISTS WOULD HAVE A STRONG ARMED FORCE WHICH THEY EITHER COULD USE TO APPLY PRESSURE OR TO THREATEN TO REKINDLE THE WAR. PEACE WOULD NOT BE ATTAINED. AND AS SOME WESTERN OBSERVERS HAVE REMARKED, THE PEACE WOULD BE BOTH TEMPORARY AND FALSE.

10. SOUTH VIET-NAM WILL HAVE TO MAINTAIN ITS ARMY AND THE WAR WILL RESUME AFTER THE AMERICANS WITHDRAW AND THE POWS ARE REPATRIATED TO THE UNITED STATES. OF COURSE, THE AMERICANS WILL DO THEIR BEST TO GIVE FINANCIAL AND MILITARY AID TO SOUTH VIET-NAM, BUT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO SUFFER FROM THE WAR.

11. IN SHORT, IF THERE IS NO EXPLICIT MENTION OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOP WITHDRAWAL THE COMMUNISTS WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS FOR KEEPING THEIR ARMS IN THE NORTH, AND THEY WILL ALSO HAVE CONDITIONS FOR MAINTAINING THEIR POSITION IN THE SOUTH, THUS AFFORDING THEM THE POTENTIAL FOR REKINDLING THE WAR. HOW CAN WE BE GUARANTEED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS WILL GIVE UP THIS ADVANTAGE?

12. THE PROBLEM FOR SOUTH VIETNAM IS TO WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS OF PUTTING THE WITHDRAWAL IN WRITING OR OF NOT PUTTING IT IN WRITING.

... THIS PROBLEM MAY BE POSED DIFFERENTLY, WITH DIFFERENT
CONDITIONS. WHETHER THE WITHDRAWAL IS WRITTEN OR
NOT WILL

NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IF THE NORTH RIES TO MAINTAIN TROOPS
HERE (THE ISSUE OF WHETHER THEY VIOLATE THE CEASEFIRE ASIDE.)
OTHER CONDITIONS MUST BE MET, NAMELY:

1. THAT THE UNITED STATE TRULY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY AID
SOUTH VIET-NAM TO STAND FIRM. THIS AID MUST INCLUDE THREE ASPECTS:

A. ARMS AND MILITARY AID (MOST OF WHICH HAS REPORTEDLY
BEEN GRANTED ALREADY);

B. ECONOMIC AID (TO CREATE FINANCIAL SOURCES FOR JK
THE BUDGET); AND

C. STRATEGIC AID (RUSSIA AND RED CHINA TO NOT ^GGRANT
NORTH VIET-NAM EXCESSIVE MILITARY AID AND WEAPONS).

2. THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE SIDE CREATE ADEQUATE ECONOMIC,
POLITICAL AND MILITARY STRENGTH TO DISCOURAGE THE COMMUNISTS.

3. THE MAIN CONDITIONS, HOWEVER, LIE IN THE AMERICANS' HANDS.

THEREFORE, THE KEY POINT IS WHETHER THE AUTHORITIES OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM ENJOY THE GUARANTEES OF THE AMERICANS.

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